

RADIOS land a Bushfire Blow



John Woodburn VK3AGD of Dunkeld
with a 1944 radio.

Reprinted from Herald Sun - December 8th 1996.
Story MICHAEL RYAN Picture BILL McAULEY

In December 1944, bushfires spread across Victoria in a horrifying wave that lasted three months and left 51 people dead.

Out of the ashes rose a plan by Western District farmer Hugh O'Rorke to use radios to provide effective communication between the fire front and brigade headquarters.

Although the idea was met with apathy and indifference by the Postmaster's General Radio Branch, army representatives, police and the newly formed Country Fire Authority, Mr O'Rorke battled to have his idea accepted.

Finally, on December 12th. 1946 he received a telegram giving permission, and without delay he sent out the first authorised radio fire call from his property "Killigrew" at Westmere near Dunkeld.

That occasion will be remem-

bered on Thursday when Victoria's first rural firefighting radio network celebrates its 50th. anniversary.

John Woodburn, who lives at Dunkeld and shared in those pioneer days, remembers Mr O'Rorke's early attempts to set up a reporting network.

"Hugh bought a number of old telephones, which he hooked up to the telephone wires, at the time carried on poles just above head height" Mr Woodburn said.

"Runners carried reports from the fire front to the telephonist, who telephoned it on to the fire brigade co-ordinator.

"The system worked for five miles all around Lake Bolac."

It was an unwieldy system, so Mr O'Rorke proposed the use of radios.

"The bureaucrats said if such a thing would work it would've been used before" Mr. Wood-

burn said.

Mr O'Rorke managed to persuade the doubters that local people with a stake in saving the land would work the system best, and won a promise of a one year trial operating licence.

The December 1946 telegram confirmed this, the first call went out and by summer's end three local brigades had transceivers connected to Mr O'Rorke's base station, to form the first effective fire brigade communications network in the world.

Mr O'Rorke's son John, who lives in Richmond, yesterday said resistance to the radio idea lingered for many years. He heard a local proclaim "Hugh, take a wet bag to the fire, - you will do more good!."



VK3XS



BALLARAT AMATEUR RADIO GROUP

OFFICE BEARERS 1996/97

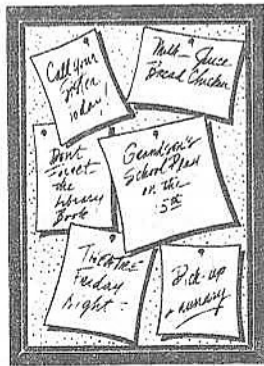
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TECH OFFICER	IAN McDONALD	VK3AXH		
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NET CO-ORDINATOR	REG CARTER	VK3CAZ		53417585
AWARDS MANAGER	RON WATKINS	VK3ZHH	53667200	53327141
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PROPERTY OFFICER	GEOFF PIGDON	VK3PAP	53311211	53327041
WICEN CHAIRMAN	GORDEN CORNELL	VK3FGC	53391135	53392427
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	CHRIS KENSELL	SWL	53327888	53327888
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CLUB STATION

VK3 BML

CLUB ADDRESS :-
THE SECRETARY BARG INC.,
BOX 1261,
MAIL CENTRE,
BALLARAT 3354,
AUSTRALIA.

REPEATERS			
VK3RBA	(VOICE)	146.750	
VK3RBS	(VOICE)	146.900	
VK3RPC	(PACKET)	144.750	
VK3RBU	(VOICE)	438.475	
VK3RMB	(BEACON)	432.535	
VK3RBV	(ATV)	426.250	



B.A.R.G. NOTICE BOARD

NOVICE CLASSES FOR 1997

Our Education Officer - Tom George VK3DMK, informs us that the Novice Classes for 1997 will commence at the B.A.R.G. Clubrooms, Unit 31 at the Ballarat Airport, on **THURSDAY 6TH. MARCH.**

Classes will start at 7.30 pm and conclude at 9.30 pm.

The course will run for 20 weeks (excluding school holidays) and the cost of the course will be \$100. (\$ 80 concession.)

This payment will also place applicants on the mailing list for the B.A.R.G. Newsletter each month..

Contact Tom George on 03 5332 7234 for further details.

MARCH GENERAL MEETING

Please note that the General meeting previously scheduled for **Friday March 28th**, has been **changed** to **FRIDAY 4TH. APRIL** so as not to upset Easter Bunny.

2 M SCRAMBLE

Don't forget that it's on again for 1997.

The SCRAMBLE is held each Sunday evening between 7.50 pm and 7.55 pm using the frequencies between 146.425 MHz to 146.600 MHz. inclusive.

Liaison and Callback is conducted via our repeater VK3RBA on 146.750 MHz. before and after the scramble. Further info. from Daryl Quirk VK3XDQ.

Blow the cobwebs out of those simplex channels and give it a go - but you need a hair trigger finger and the ability to be able to talk fast - You may or may not be a winner but it is all really good fun. TRY IT.

VENUE CHANGE

All members should now be aware of the change in the activities venue for B.A.R.G. However if for some reason you have missed out, please be informed that the Ballarat Amateur Radio Group is now leasing club rooms (Unit 31) at the Ballarat Airport, off Learmonth Rd. Ballarat. This area was of course the site of the Wireless Air Gunners School during and after WW2. Most BARG activities, meetings etc. will now be conducted from this venue, and it will be regarded as "Home Base".

9762 4

FLASHBACK TO 1939

The "Argus" newspaper Melbourne - 21st January 1939.

Included in the extensive report of the tragic bushfires which devastated many parts of Victoria and the bushlands surrounding Melbourne, and resulted in the destruction of hundreds of houses and properties and the loss of many lives, was this headline:

AMATEUR RADIO WORK - OPERATORS IN BUSH

So valuable was the work performed by the Amateur Radio operators during the bush fires, that an emergency organisation will probably be formed to provide communications should there be any similar disaster in the future.

When it was learned that the bushfires had destroyed communications between Melbourne and several bush districts, an appeal was made by the Wireless Institute of Australia for members to go to the country and take over communications services. Nearly 20 operators offered to leave immediately. Nine of them were selected and they all offered to stay for a week in the bush with their portable transmitters and receivers.

Within half an hour of their arrival in the heart of the affected areas at Beech Forest, Bright, Tallangatta, Wood's Point and Noojee, the stations were in touch with Melbourne.

At Omeo, one amateur operator was Mr A.R. Williams, whose call sign is VK3VE provided Melbourne with news that communications had broken down. He had been for 3 days fighting fires, and then he was for 40 hours almost continuously receiving and sending messages for people in the district.

One of the first press Telegrams with news of the fire received by the "Argus" was transmitted by Mr Williams and picked up by an amateur operator in Melbourne.

Through radio intervention a rescue party saved a long and difficult trek through the bush to Mt. Hotham which had been evacuated. unknown to the rescuers.

The Postmaster - Generals Department co-operated with amateur operators and all Telegrams and other messages required were put through by voluntary operators until a normal Telegraph Service was restored.

In addition to those operations at the Bush Fire Centres and in Melbourne, other Victorian amateurs and several from other states remained at their controls to keep clear the channels occupied by stations handling bushfire messages where there was a possibility of interference by stations outside the affected areas. The sentry stations would request a clear channel. In view of the success achieved it is expected that amateur operators will form a group to instal and maintain apparatus and to offer their services in the case of further emergency. Interference from a station engaged on regular experimental transmissions is the main difficulty. It is hoped that an emergency channel will be adopted in New Zealand where there is always the danger of communications being cut off by earthquakes as in the United States.

The bushfires which started on the 9th January were finally contained and most areas were under control by the 24th January 1939.

Contributed by Dick VK3LDC.

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EXTENDED RECEIVE MOD.

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COMES WITH SPEAKER MIC, SOFT CARRY CASE, DRYCELL BATTERY CASE, BLANKING COVER AND A BONUS IN LINE 20 W 2 M LINEAR AMPLIFIER

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(HEY FELLAS, COME ON I'M DESPERATE !)

4X 14 ELEMENT 432 MEG BEAMS

INCLUDES STACKING FRAME, PHASING HARNESS AND 4 WAY POWER SPLITTER.

\$400.00

1 X 12 ELEMENT 144 MEG BEAM

6M LONG BOOM

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CONTACT VK3GR BEN

BUS. 03-53203601

PLAN FOR GOOD INSURANCE

THIS MAN WAS INJURED IN AN ACCIDENT AND WAS THEREFOR REQUIRED TO FILL OUT AN INSURANCE CLAIM FORM. AS THE CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT HE PUT "POOR PLANING". WHEN THE INSURANCE COMPANY ASKED FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, THIS WAS HIS RESPONSE:

.."YOU SAID IN YOUR LETTER THAT I SHOULD EXPLAIN MORE FULLY AND I TRUST THE FOLLOWING DETAILS ARE SUFFICIENT. I AM AN AMATEUR RADIO OPERATOR AND ON THE DAY OF THE ACCIDENT, I WAS WORKING ON THE TOP SECTION OF MY NEW 80-FOOT TOWER. WHEN I COMPLETED MY WORK I DISCOVERED THAT I HAD, OVER THE COURSE OF MANY TRIPS UP THE TOWER, BROUGHT UP SOME 300 POUNDS OF TOOLS AND SPARE HARDWARE. RATHER THAN CARRY THE NOW UN-NEED TOOLS DOWN BY HAND I DECIDED TO LOWER THE ITEMS DOWN IN A SMALL BARREL. I THEN WENT DOWN AND UNTIED THE ROPE HOLDING IT TIGHTLY TO ENSURE A SLOW DECENT OF THE BARREL. YOU WILL NOTE IN BLOCK 11 OF THE ACCIDENT REPORT FORM THAT I WEIGH ONLY 155 POUNDS. DUE TO MY SURPRISE AT BEING JERKED OF THE GROUND SO SUDDENLY, I LOST MY PRESENCE OF MIND AND FORGOT TO LET GO OF THE ROPE. NEEDLESS TO SAY, I PROCEEDED AT A RATHER RAPID RATE OF SPEED UP THE SIDE OF THE TOWER. IN THE VICINITY OF THE 40-FOOT LEVEL, I MET THE BARREL COMING DOWN. THIS EXPLAINS MY FRACTURED SKULL AND BROKEN COLLARBONE. SLOWED ONLY SLIGHTLY I CONTINUED MY RAPID ASSENT, NOT STOPPING UNTIL THE FINGER OF MY RIGHT HAND WERE TWO KNUCKLES DEEP IN THE PULLEY. FORTUNATELY, BY THIS TIME, I HAD REGAINED MY PRESENCE OF MIND AND WAS ABLE TO HOLD ONTO THE ROPE IN SPITE OF MY PAIN. AT APPROXIMENTLY THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, THE BARREL OF TOOLS HIT THE GROUND AND THE BOTTOM FELL OUT OF THE BARREL. DEVOID THE WEIGHT OF TOOLS, THE BARREL NOW WEIGHING ONLY 20 POUNDS. I REFER YOU AGAIN TO MY WEIGHT IN BLOCK NUMBER 11.

AS YOU MIGHT IMAGINE, I BEGAN A RAPID DESCENT DOWN THE SIDE OF THE TOWER. IN THE VICINITY OF THE 40 FOOT LEVEL, I MET THE BARREL COMING UP. THIS ACCOUNTS FOR THE TWO FRACTURED ANKLES AND THE LACERATIONS ON MY LEGS AND LOWER BODY. THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE BARREL SLOWED ME DOWN ENOUGH TO LESSEN MY INJURIES WHEN I FELL ON THE PILE OF TOOLS AND, FORTUNATELY ONLY THREE VERTEBRAE WERE CRACKED. I'M SORRY TO REPORT AS I LAY THEIR ON THE TOOLS IN PAIN, UNABLE TO STAND AND WATCHING THE BARREL 80 FOOT ABOVE, I AGAIN LOST MY PRESENCE OF MIND. I LET GO OF THE ROPE AND.....



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\$22.00 for 6 litres (inc. tax)

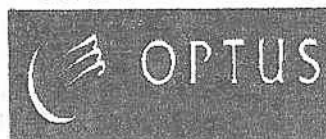
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CASTROL RX SUPER SAE 15W-40 has
been developed for your vehicle and is equally
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73 de Bill VK3PH



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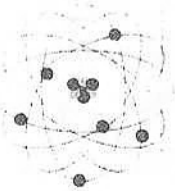
\$650 THE LOT.

CONTACT GORDON VK3AB1 03-52891812

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CONTACT VK3JFL RICHARD
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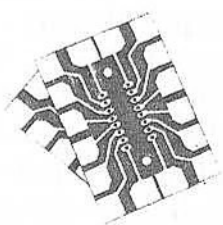
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B.A.R.G.

Membership 1996/7

(Printed 11/2/97)



MEMBER / SPOUSE LISTING

Call	Surname	First Name	OM/YL/XYL
N9NAY	SETINA	GREG	
SWL	D'ANGRI	VALDA	NORM
SWL	KENSELL	CHRIS	
VK3AAI	FELSTEAD	MURRAY	KAREN
VK3AAP	FOLEY	BUD	PAT
VK3ABI	YORKE	GORDON	LORIS
VK3ADB	SMITH	GEOFF	TIJA
VK3AGD	WOODBURN	JOHN	GARLAND
VK3AIQ	GLENN	JAMES	
VK3AKS	PRIME	PETER	
VK3ANH	HUMPHREYS	JIM	MARJ.
VK3AQM	SEDDON	PHIL	CHRIS
VK3AXH	MC.DONALD	IAN	NOLA
VK3BNC	TERRILL	BOB	BETTY
VK3BQC	COLLIER	IAN	
VK3BVI	ALLAN	CLEM	PATRICIA
VK3CAZ	CARTER	REG	SHEILA
VK3CB	BILSTON	CLIFF	HELEN
VK3CFB	WRIGHT	JIM	
VK3CFH	HAZELDINE	JOHN	MONICA
VK3CHP	VENEMA	AARON	
VK3CIS	STANLEY	IAN	
VK3CJB	BROWN	JOHN	
VK3DCS	STEWART	CHARLIE	SHIRLEY
VK3DET	TURNER	ERNIE	
VK3DIE	ANDREWS	GREG	
VK3DMK	GEORGE	TOM	
VK3DOK	FOWLER	GEORGE	FLORIS
VK3DS	LANCE	GEORGE	JOAN
VK3ENT	SOLOMON	ARTHUR	MEG
VK3EWD	DUNKLEY	BILL	MARGARET
VK3FAQ	SELLERS	BOB	
VK3FD	ROBINSON	IAN	MARGARET
VK3FGC	CORNELL	GORDON	HELEN
VK3FMC	CURNOW	MARY	DICK
VK3GR	ORCHARD	BEN	RAYLENE
VK3HWK	KEALL	WENDY	DARYL
VK3IDC	CHENNELL	IAN	
VK3JEM	SNIBSON	LES	
VK3JFL	VOSS	RICHARD	
VK3KAY	KAY	DOUG	DEBBIE
VK3KCA	APPLEBY	CEDRIC	

Call	Surname	First Name	OM/YL/XYL
VK3KGL	HEKKMA	HARRY	THERESE
VK3KL	GLEESON	LAURIE	
VK3KQQ	DAVIDSON	NEIL	GWEN
VK3KVW	VAN DER VALLE	MICHAEL	BARBARA
VK3LBA	D'ANGRI	NORM	VALDA
VK3LDC	CURNOW	DICK	MARY
VK3LPM	MACKAY	RON	LILLIAN
VK3LSM	MC.GREGOR	LYNDON	
VK3LU	MULLER	JEFF	BERYL
VK3MJX	BLUM	WERNER	PATRICIA
VK3NAY	EZARD	BRIAN	
VK3NIZ	BAYLEY	TED	
VK3NTA	ATTWOOD	TREVOR	
VK3PAP	PIGDON	JEFF	
VK3PH	HEWITT	BILL	
VK3PRJ	JANSON	RON	MARJORIE
VK3SE	WIDGERY	STAN	
VK3VBA	RAPER	DOUG	VAL
VK3VCW	BILSTON	KEN	
VK3WN	HUGHES	KEVIN	PEARL
VK3XAH	HOBSON	ADRIAN	
VK3XDQ	QUIRK	DARYL	WENDY
VK3YJM	MIKKELSEN	JEFF	
VK3YNB	MC.CONNELL	DAVID	MARETA
VK3YZR	HANNAN	PETER	
VK3ZHH	WATKINS	RON	ANNETTE



Please notify any changes to Callsign, Address or other relevant details.

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COMING EVENTS AND INFORMATION

Friday 28th. February - General Meeting (Ballarat Aerodrome)

Thursday 6th March - NOVICE CLASSES COMMENCE

Wednesday 19th March - Committee Meeting

Friday 4th April - Gen. Meeting. (Moved from 28th March (Good Friday)).

Wednesday 16th April - Committee Meeting

Friday 2nd May - General Meeting (Moved from 25th April - School Hols.)

Monday Nights - Practical Nights.

2M Scramble - Sunday Nights 7.50pm 146.425 to 146.600 Mhz.

Club Net - Thursday Nights 8pm. 3.610 +/- QRM - (8.30pm during Daylight Saving.)

WICEN Training Nights - 4th.Wednesday each month.



INFORMATION

**DON'T FORGET - MOST ACTIVITIES WILL NOW BE HELD AT THE B.A.R.G.
CLUBROOMS - UNIT 31 BALLARAT AIRPORT.**

B.A.R.G.

THE BALLARAT AMATEUR RADIO GROUP INC.

A GROUP OF RADIO ENTHUSIASTS LICENSED TO EXPERIMENT
WITH LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL RADIO COMMUNICATIONS ON AN AMATEUR BASIS.

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B.A.R.G. NEWS



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